

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /060 W

----- 006436

R 231423Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5303

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USBERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: FRG POLITICAL POLLS INCONCLUSIVE

SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ABOUT THE
POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF THE GERMAN PUBLIC HAVE RECENTLY
BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC PRESS. THEY ALL
AGREE THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IS EXTREMELY POPULAR; IN
FACT, MORE SO THAN HIS OWN POLITICAL PARTY, THE SPD.
CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE KOHL IS ALSO POPULAR ALBEIT
LESS THAN SCHMIDT AND SOMEWHAT LESS THAN HIS OWN PARTY.
FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS CONTINUES TO POLARIZE OPINION BUT
STILL RANKS HIGH IN POPULARITY POLLS. AN ALLENSBACH
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POLL FOR EXAMPLE FOUND THAT 51 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS

BELIEVED STRAUSS TO BE "WELL SUITED FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICE" ALTHOUGH 51 PERCENT ALSO DID NOT HAVE A GOOD OPINION OF HIM. THE POLLS ARE LESS THAN USEFUL IN PRE-DICTING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR GREAT VARIANCE, AND BECAUSE THE UNDECIDED VOTE IS TOO LARGE. ALL THE POLLS INDICATE THAT THE CDU/CSU IS LIKELY TO EMERGE AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN THE BUNDESTAG AFTER NEXT OCTOBER'S ELECTIONS EVEN IF THE UNION PARTIES DO NOT GAIN THE NECESSARY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. AS THE YEAR-END APPROACHES THE RESULTS OF A NUMBER OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS HAVE BEEN RELEASED IN THE FRG. THE POLLS AGREE THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IS BOTH POPULAR AND RESPECTED. IN AN ALLENSBACH POLL ("STERN" DEC. 4) 79 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS FOUND SCHMIDT WELL SUITED FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICE. IN AN IFAK POLL ("SPIEGEL" DEC. 15) 47 PERCENT FELT THAT SCHMIDT WOULD BE A BETTER CHANCELLOR THAN HELMUT KOHL (32 PERCENT) AND 19 PERCENT FELT THEY WERE EQUAL.

2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHMIDT'S POPULARITY AND THAT OF THE PARTY, WHILE NOT NEW, IS WORRISOME TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS WHO ARE AFRAID THAT THE GAP WILL BE SO GREAT THAT THE SO-CALLED "SCHMIDT EFFEKT" WILL NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL THE PARTY THROUGH.

3. CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE KOHL ALSO DOES WELL IN POPULARITY POLLS ALTHOUGH HE LAGS BEHIND SCHMIDT AND HIS OWN PARTY. THE ALLENSBACH POLL MENTIONED ABOVE SHOWED THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS FELT THAT KOHL WAS WELL SUITED FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICE. THE IFAK POLL BORE OUT HIS POPULARITY BUT SHOWED HIM LESS POPULAR THAN THE CDU/CSU.

4. THE CONTROVERSIAL BAVARIAN CDU CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS CONTINUES TO DRAW A SHARP REACTION FROM THE GERMAN PUBLIC. ALTHOUGH 51 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED BY ALLENSBACH DID NOT HAVE A GOOD OPINION OF HIM THE SAME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERCENTAGE FOUND HIM WELL SUITED FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICE. WHEN STRAUSS' NAME IS MENTIONED TOGETHER WITH THE CDU/CSU PARTIES, THE SUPPORT FOR THE UNION PARTIES IN THE POLLS DROPS A FEW POINTS.

5. A NUMBER OF POLLS TAKEN IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER WHICH ASKED THE VOTERS HOW THEY WOULD VOTE SHOULD THE ELECTION TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY SHOWED

DIFFERENT AND OFTEN CONTRADICTORY RESULTS. IN ANY EVENT,
THE UNDECIDED VOTE (OFTEN FACTORED INTO THE RESULTS IN
THE SAME PROPORTIONS AS THOSE WHO HAD
EXPRESSED A CHOICE) WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO MAKE THE POLL
RESULTS OF LITTLE USE IN PREDICTING THE BUNDESTAG
ELECTIONS NEXT OCTOBER.

6. THE RESULTS OF FOUR RECENT POLLS OF VOTER CHOICE
IF THE ELECTION WAS HELD ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY WERE
AS FOLLOWS:

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A. ALLENSBACH

CDU/CSU	50.7 PERCENT
SPD	39.7 PERCENT
FDP	8.6 PERCENT
OTHER PARTIES	1.0 PERCENT

B. INFRATEST

CDU	47 PERCENT
SPD	40 "
FDP	11 "

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C. EMNID

CDU/CSU	45 PERCENT
SPD	43 "
FDP	10 "

D. IFAK

CDU/CSU	45 PERCENT
SPD	42 "
FDP	11 "
OTHER	2 PERCENT

7. COMMENT: THESE POLLS ARE MUCH TOO EARLY AND EVEN TOO DIVERGENT TO TELL US WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE NEXT FALL. ALTHOUGH ALL THE POLLS SHOW THE CDU/CSU AS THE LARGEST VOTE GETTER, SEVERAL SHOW THAT THE COMBINED SPD/FDP VOTE WILL CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY. WE BELIEVE, POLLS OR NO POLLS, THAT IT IS PREMATURE AT THIS POINT TO TRY TO FORECAST WHO WILL WIN NEXT OCTOBER.

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